

ALAMEDA COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE

Alameda County Board of Supervisors to Honor the 2022 Arts Leadership Award Recipients and Celebrate National Arts and Humanities Month on Tuesday, October 4, 2022

(Oakland, CA) – The Alameda County Arts Commission is pleased to recognize six individuals for their achievements and contributions impacting the arts community and residents of Alameda County. The following individuals are the recipients of the 2022 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award: Dennis Baker, Tina Blaine, Anne Giancola, Naomi Johnson-Diouf, Naru Kwina, and Ruey Lin Syrop. The six award recipients will be honored by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors with commendations presented in conjunction with the County's celebration of October as National Arts and Humanities Month. The event will take place during the Board's meeting on Tuesday, October 4, beginning at 10:45 am. Members of the public may participate in-person at the Board Chambers located at 1221 Oak Street, 5th Floor, Oakland. Alternatively, members of the public may choose to view the meeting and participate remotely through Zoom teleconferencing. For information, please visit the Alameda County Board of Supervisors' website at www.acgov.org/board.

Each year the Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission review nominations submitted by the public for the Arts Leadership Award program and then select the award recipients. During the Arts Commission's selection process, there was a tie-vote. This resulted in awarding two individuals for District Three with a total of six individuals receiving the 2022 Arts Leadership Award. The Alameda County Arts Commission acknowledges all of the nominees for their leadership in the arts and for their service to our community. Additionally, the Arts Commission thanks the Alameda County community members who submitted nominations.



Supervisorial District One

Dennis Baker is an Artist and the Co-Founder and President of the Alliance for the Visual Arts. He is also the Co-Leader of the Tri-Valley Artist Studio Tour and a Member of the Livermore Art Association, the Pleasanton Art League, and the Dublin Arts Collective, where he served as an Executive Board Member. In 2016, Dennis co-founded the Alliance for the Visual Arts (AVA) which serves the Tri-Valley region including the

Alameda County cities of Dublin, Livermore, and Pleasanton. The Alliance for Visual Arts offers space on its website, free of charge, to help artists establish their online presence, display their works, and take part in AVA

events and community outreach. During the pandemic, he was essential to the establishment of the highly successful Tri-Valley Artist Studio Tour which is scheduled to return in May of 2023. Artists of the Tri-Valley are invited to join AVA free of charge and are offered a space on the website to establish their online presence and take part in the AVA events and community outreach. Dennis and AVA seek to support visual arts organizations in the Tri-Valley and be a resource for information and education for artists and the public. Dennis Baker lives in Livermore.



Supervisorial District Two

Ruey Lin Syrop is an Artist, the Curator for the Hayward Arts Council's John O'Lague Galleria at Hayward City Hall, and a Board Member of the Hayward Arts Council. She is a Member of A.R.T., Inc. in Castro Valley, the Sun Gallery in Hayward, and the Oriental Art Association in San Francisco. Ruey joined the Hayward Arts Council in 1994 and in 2021 she became the Curator of the John O'Lague Galleria. She was instrumental in helping both organizations A.R.T., Inc, and the Hayward Arts Council make the transition to online exhibitions and meetings during the pandemic, keeping people connected and continuing to provide opportunities for artists to show their work. She has been helping artists connect with local businesses to show their art in both Hayward and Castro Valley. Ruey has a BA in Fine Arts from the National Taiwan Normal University. When Ruey is not spending time volunteering, she is focused on making an impact with her own art, which deals with environmental and social issues. Ruey continually reaches out and connects with community members who hail from diverse backgrounds and age groups. Ruey Lin Syrop lives in Hayward.



Supervisorial District Three

Tina Blaine is the Former Executive Director of Rhythmix Cultural Works located in the City of Alameda, and a Musician, Composer, and Sound Designer. Tina, who is also known as “bean,” led Rhythmix Cultural Works for 12 years, serving as its Executive Director from 2010-2022. During this time Rhythmix became an important arts hub for the City of Alameda and the East Bay. At Rhythmix, Tina produced hundreds of concerts and events including 18 public art walks featuring local artists of world music, dance and visual art traditions to bring the Alameda County community together. Tina’s collaborative spirit has supported many partnerships with artists and non-profits on a variety of projects. During the pandemic, Tina spearheaded the effort to retrofit the Rhythmix’s theater and transform the organization’s programs into online offerings, including its signature Performance, Arts & Learning program. This multicultural arts education program expanded from serving 3,000 students annually in a live setting to the new virtual format reaching more than 45,000 students throughout

Alameda County via online access to assembly videos and resource materials. Tina has also composed music for NPR, video games, television, and documentary soundtracks. Tina Blaine lives in Alameda.



Supervisorial District Three

Naru Kwina is a Rap Artist, Teacher and Founder of Alternative Minds Foundation and its Hip Learning program. Naru, who is also known as “Dr. Science,” was inspired by his students’ ability to remember and recite songs they heard on the radio, so he started to make Hip Hop songs about human anatomy to raise his students’ interest in science and to lock in the information he was exchanging during class time. The children were so successful in processing the information in song format that Naru decided to share Hip Learning with the general public. “Hip Science, the Human Body 101,” presented as an audio CD was released in 2005. Naru later wrote and performed in a full-length play titled “Hip Science, the Human Body 101 Live.” Hip Learning is now available for concerts and workshops, schools, festivals, and science centers. Naru expanded Hip Learning by creating a full color booklet to accompany the audio CD. Naru is currently working on creating a Hip Learning hands-on mobile science center and performance vehicle to travel directly to schools and neighborhoods in the Bay Area to continue to teach and inspire youth about science using Hip Hop. Naru Kwina lives in Oakland.



Supervisorial District Four

Anne Giancola is an Artist, Arts Educator and the Visual Arts and Education Manager at Livermore Valley Arts. She is also a City of Pleasanton Civic Arts Commissioner, Founding Member of Alliance for the Visual Arts, Board Member of the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council and a Member of the Northern California Women’s Caucus for Art. During the pandemic, Anne was instrumental in establishing the highly successful Tri-Valley Artist Studio Tour. Combining her skills as a creative community builder with her affinity for working artists, Anne brings together diverse community groups to foster innovation. Anne develops exhibits, seminars, workshops, and public art projects for a synthesis of creative endeavors. Anne has a Master’s of Science degree in Applied Communication where she first launched a class that accommodated students of all ages. Her goal is to show that creativity is in all of us and that the benefits of art are deep. As a working artist, Anne’s focus is on painting murals. Through her mural projects she also encourages collaboration with other artists and youth. Anne uses her skills as a working artist and as an arts administrator to enrich Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley area. Anne Giancola lives in Pleasanton in Supervisorial District 4.



Supervisorial District Five

Naomi Johnson-Diouf is the Artistic and Executive Director of Diamano Coura West African Dance Company at the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts in Oakland.

Naomi taught African Dance at Berkeley High School for 28 years. During her time at the school she expanded and led the Afro-Haitian Dance Program and was the Chair of the

African American Studies Department. Growing up in Monrovia, Liberia, and emigrating

to the U.S., Naomi has had a profound impact on the Black Arts Movement both locally, and internationally. A

strong advocate of arts in education, Naomi has taught throughout the Bay Area and California. After 28 years,

she retired from teaching and leadership positions at Berkeley High School and Laney College. Naomi continues in

her leadership role of the Diamano Coura West African Dance Company where she has taught for 30 years. Naomi

has received numerous awards and fellowships including the Malonga Casquelourd Lifetime Achievement Award

from the SF Ethnic Dance Festival, the Dance/USA Fellowship to Artists, and the National Heritage Fellowship from

the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Council for the Traditional Arts. Her vision, brilliant artistry,

and powerful sense of service to the community, continues to inform the next generation of arts leaders. Naomi

Johnson-Diouf lives in Castro Valley.

For more information about the program or the award recipients, please contact the Alameda County Arts Commission at (510) 208-9646 or by email at artscommission@acgov.org

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